



Rudyard Kipling.

ABACK THE FUNNEL --- By RUDYARD KIPLING

The accompanying stories are the first of a series of little known and consequently practically new tales by Mr. Kipling which will appear in THE SUN each Sunday. They were originally written for newspapers in India, and are in a way a companion set to his famous "Plain Tales From the Hills."

"The old cat's tumbled down the ventilator, sir, and he's swearing away under the furnace door in the stoke hole," said the second officer to the captain of the Whanghoa.

"Now what in thunder was Erastias doing at the mouth of the ventilator? It's four feet from the deck and piled up at that. Any of the children been amusing themselves with him, d'you think? I wouldn't have Erastias disturbed in his inside for all the gold in the Treasury," said the captain. "Tell some one to bring him up, and handle him delicately, for he's not a quiet beast."

In three minutes a bucket appeared on deck. It was covered with a wooden lid. "Think he have make die this time," said the Chinese sailor who carried the coffin with a grin. "Catchee him upside coals—no open eye—no spit—no catchee my. Have got bucket, allee same, and make tight. See!"

He dived his bare arm under the lid, but withdrew it with a yell, dropping the bucket at the same time. "Hya! Can do. Maskee dlop down—masky spulum coal. Have catchee my light there."

Road was trickling from his elbow. He moved aft, while the bucket, mysteriously worked by hidden force, trundled to and fro across the decks, swearing about.

Emerging finally Erastias, tomtat and grandfather in chief of the Whanghoa—a gaunt brindled beast lacking one ear, with every hair on his body armed and erect. He was patched with coal dust, very stiff and sore all over, and very anxious to take the world into his confidence as to his wrongs. For this reason he did not run when he was clear of the bucket, but sitting on his hunkers regarded the captain as one who would say: "You hold a master's certificate and call yourself a seaman, and yet you allow this sort of thing on your boat."

"Guess I must apologize, old man," said the captain gravely. "Those ventilators are a little too broad in the beam for a passenger of your build. What made you walk down it? No, a rat, eh? You're too well fed to trouble a rat. Drink was it?"

Erastias turned his back on the captain. He was a tailless Japanese cat, and the abruptness of his termination gave him a specially brusque appearance.

"Shouldn't wonder if the old man hasn't been stealing something and was getting away from the galley. He's the biggest reprobate that ever shipped—and that's saying something. No, he isn't my property exactly. I've got a notion that he owns the ship. Gathered that from the way he goes round after six bells to see the lights out. The chief engineer says he built the engines. Any way the old man sits in the engine room and sort of keeps an eye on the boilers. He was on the ship before I joined her—that's seven years ago, when we were running up and down and around and about the China seas."

Erastias, his back to the company, was busy in cleaning his disarranged fur. He licked and swore alternately. The ventilator incident had hurt his whiskers sorely.

"He knows we are talking about him," continued the captain. "He's a responsible kind of critter. That's natural when you come to think that he has saved a quarter of a million of dollars. At present his wants are few—guess he would like a netting over those ventilators that thing—but some day he'll begin to live up to his capital."

"Saved a quarter of a million dollars? What securities did he invest 'em in?" asked a man from Foochow.

"Here in this bottom. He saved the Whanghoa with a full cargo of tea, silk and opium and \$13,000 in bar silver. Yes; that's about the extent of the old man's savings. I commanded. The old man was the rescuer, and I was more grateful to him 'cause it was my darned body that nearly brought us into the trouble. I was new to these waters; new to the Chinaman and his fascinating little ways, being a New England man by raising. Erastias was raised by the devil. That's who he was. Never ran across his kind. Ran across a forsaken sea, though, in the Whanghoa a little to the southeast of this with 800 steerage passengers, all Chinamen, for various and undominated ports. Had the pleasure of sending eighteen of 'em into the water. Yes, that's so, isn't it, old man?"

Erastias finished licking himself and moved affirmatively.

"Yes, we carried four white officers—a Westerner, two Vermont men and myself. There were ten Americans, a couple of Danes and a half caste knocking round the ship, and the crew were Chinese, but most of 'em good Chinese. Only one Chinese I ever met. We had four steerage passengers 'tween decks. Most of 'em lay around and played dominoes or smoked opium. We had bad weather at the start, and the steer-

age were powerful sick. I judged they would have no insides to them when the weather lifted, so I didn't put any guards on them. Wanted all my men to work the ship. Engines rotten as Congress, and under sail half the time. Next time I carry Chinese steerage trash I'll hire a Gatling and mount it on the 'tween decks hatch.

"We were fooling about between islands—about a hundred and fifty thousand islands all wrapped up in fog. When the fog laid the wind the engines broke down. One of the passengers—carried no ladies that journey—came to me one evening. 'I calculate there's a conspiracy 'tween decks,' he said. 'Those pigtailed are talking together. No good ever came of

tern came down the alleyway. Behind it was the passenger that had spoken to me, and all the rest of the crowd, except the half caste.

"Are you homesick any now?" said my passenger. The 'tween decks woke up with a yell at the light and some one fired up the hatchway. Then we began our share of the fun—the ten passengers and I. Eleven six shooters. That cleared the first rush of the pigtailed, but we continued firing on principle, working our way down the steps. No one came down from the spar deck to assist, though I heard considerable of a tramping. The pigtailed below were growing like cats. I heard the lookout man shout, 'Junk on the port bow,' and the bell ring in the engine room

light, the half caste quit for topside and got the quartermaster to load the signal gun with handspikes and bring it forward in case the fo'c'sle wished to assist in the row. That was the best half caste I ever met. But the fo'c'sle didn't assist. They were sick. So were the men below—horror sick. That was the way the old man saved the Whanghoa."

A MENAGERIE ABROAD

It was pyjama time on the Madura in the Bay of Bengal, and the incense of the very early morning cigar went up to the stainless skies. Every one knew pyjama time—the long hour that follows the removal of the beds from the saloon skylight and the consumption of chota hazri. Most men know, too, that the choicest stories of many seas may be picked up then—from the longwinded histories of the colonial

a giraffe has the eyes of a sorrowful nun, and this creature was just brimming over with liquid tenderness. The seven foot neck rather spoiled the effect, but I'll always recollect those eyes."

"Say, did you kiss the critter?" demanded the orchid hunter en route to Slam.

"No; I remembered that it was darn valuable, and I didn't want to lose

"I was nearly helpless with laughing, though I knew if the concern went over it would be no laughing matter for me. Well, by good luck she came round—the quartermaster was a strong man at a rope's end. First of all she sewed her neck round, and I could see those tender, loving eyes under the stars sort of saying: 'Cruel man! What are you doing to my tail?' Then the foot came on board and she bumped herself up under the awning, looking ready to cry with disappointment. The funniest thing was she didn't make any noise—a pig would ha' roused the ship in no time—only every time she dropped her foot on the deck it was like firing a revolver, the hoofs clicked so. We headed her toward the bows, back to her moorings—just

"What I feel most down here," said it, and by "down here" I presume he meant the inferno of his own wretchedness, "is the difficulty about getting a bath. A man can always catch a free lunch at any of the bars in the city if he has money enough to buy a drink with, and you can sleep out for six or eight months of the year without harm, but San Francisco doesn't run to free baths. It's not an amusing life any way you look at it. I'm more or less used to things, but it hurts me even now to meet a decent man who knows something of life in the old country. I was raised at Harrow—Harrow, if you please—and I'm not five-and-twenty yet, and I haven't got a penny and I haven't got a friend and there is nothing in creation that I can command except a drink, and I have to beg for that. Have you ever begged for a drink? It hurts at first, but you get used to it. My father's a parson. I don't think he knows I beg drink. He lives near Salisbury. Do you know Salisbury at all? And then there's my mother too. But I have not heard from either of them for a couple of years. They think I'm in a real estate office in Washington Territory, coining money hand over fist. If ever you run across them—I suppose you will some day—there's the address. Tell them that you've seen me and that I am well and fit. Understand?—well and fit. I guess I'll be dead by the time you see 'em. That's hard. Men oughtn't to die at five-and-twenty—of drink. Say, were you ever mashed on a girl? Not one of these you see, girls out here, but an English one—the sort of girl one meets at the vicarage tennis party, don't you know. A girl of our own set. I don't mean mashed exactly, but dead, clean gone, head over ears; and worse than that I was once, and I fancy I took the thing pretty much as I take liquor now. I didn't know when to stop. It didn't seem to me that there was any reason for stopping in affairs of that kind. I'm quite sure there's no reason for stopping half way with liquor. Go the whole hog and die. It's all right, though—I'm not going to get drunk here. F in the morning will suit me just as well, and I haven't the chance of talking to one of you fellows often. So you cut about in fine clothes, go you, and take your drinks at the bars and put up at the Palace? All Englishmen do. Well, here's luck; you may be what I am one of these days. You'll find companions quite as well raised as yourself."

"But about this girl. Don't do what I did. I fell in love with her. She lived near us in Salisbury; that was when I had a clean shirt every day and hired horses to ride. One of the guineas I sent her that amusement would keep me for a week here. But about this girl. I don't think some men ought to be allowed to fall in love any more than they ought to be allowed to taste whiskey. She said she cared for me. Used to say that about a thousand times a day, with a kiss in between. I think about those things now, and they make me nearly as drunk as the whiskey does. Do you know anything about that love making business? I stole a copy of Cleopatra off a bookstall in Kearney street, and that chap says a very true thing about it. You can't stop when it's once started, and when it's all over you can't give it up at the word of command. I forget the precise language. That girl cared for me. I'd give something if she could see me now. She doesn't like men without collars and odd boots and somebody else's hat; but anyhow she made me what I am, and some day she'll know it. I came out here two years ago to a real estate office; my father bought me some sort of a place in the firm. We were all Englishmen, but we were about a match for an average Yankee; but I forgot to tell you I was engaged to the girl before I came out. Never you make a woman swear oaths of eternal constancy. She'll break every one of them as soon as her mind changes, and call you unjust for making her swear them. I worked enough for five men in my first year. I got a little house and lot in Tacoma fit for any woman. I never drank, I hardly ever smoked, I sold real estate all day and wrote letters at night. She wrote letters, too, about as full of affection as they make 'em. You can tell nothing from a woman's letter, though. If they want to hide anything they just double the 'dears' and 'darlings,' and then giggle when the man fancies himself deceived."

"I don't suppose I was worse off than hundreds of others, but it seems to me that she might have had the grace to let me down easy. She went and got married. I don't suppose she knew exactly what she was doing, because I got the letters just the same six weeks after she was married! It was an odd copy of an English paper that showed me what had happened. It came in on the same day as one of her letters, telling me she would be true to the gates of death. Sounds like a novel, doesn't it? But it didn't amuse me in the least. I wasn't constructed to pitch the letters into the fire and pick up with a Yankee girl. I wrote her a letter; I rather wish I could remember what was in that letter. Then I went to a bar in Tacoma and had some whiskey, about a gallon, I suppose. If I had anything approaching to a word of honor about me, I would give it you that I did not know what happened until I was told that my partnership with the firm had been dissolved, and that the house and lot did not belong to me any more. I would have left the firm and sold the house myself, but the crash sobered me for about three days. Then I started another jamboree. I might have got back after the first one and been a prominent citizen, but the second bout settled matters. Then I began to slide on the down grade straight off, and here I am now. I could write you a book about what I have come through, if I could remember it. The worst of it is I can see that she wasn't worth losing anything in life for, but I've lost just everything, and I'm like the priest chap in Cleopatra—I can't get over what I remember. If she had let me down easy, and given me warning I should have been awfully cut up for a time, but I should have pulled through. She didn't do that, though. She lied to me all along, and married a curate, and I dare say she'll be a virtuous wife vicar later on; but the little affair broke me dead, and if I had more whiskey in me I should be blubbering like a calf all round this dive. That would have disgusted you, wouldn't it?"

"Yes," said I.



Then we struck something and there was a yell inside and outside the ship that would have lifted your hair out.

pigtailed talking. I'm from Frisco, I authorize on these matters. 'Not on this ship,' I said; 'I've no use for duplicate authority.' 'You'll be homesick after a this time to-morrow,' he said, and quit. I guess he told the other passengers his notions.

"Erastias shared my cabin in general. I didn't care to dispute with a cat that went heeled the way he did. That particular night when I came down he was not inclined for repose. When I shut the door he scrambled till I let him out. When he was out he scrambled to come back. When he was back he jumped all round the shanty yowling. I stroked him and the sparks irrigated his back as if 'twas the smokestack of a river steamer. 'I'll get you a wife, old man,' I said, 'next voyage. It is no good for you to be alone with me.' 'Whooper, yousee-yaw-aw-aw,' said Erastias. 'Let me get out of this.' I looked him square between the eyes to fix the place where I'd come down with a boot heel (he was getting monotonous), and as I looked I saw the animal was just possessed with deadly fear. It human fear—crawling, shaking fear. It human fear of the green of his eyes and crept over me in billowing waves—each wave colder than the last. 'Unburden your mind, Erastias,' I said. 'What's going to happen?' 'Wheepee-yeepee-yay-ya-woop!' said Erastias, backing to the door and scratching.

"I quit my cabin sweating big drops, and somehow my hand shut on my six shooter. The grip of the handle soothes a man when he is afraid. I heard the whole ship 'tween decks rustling under me like all the woods of Maine when the winds' up. The lamp over the 'tween decks was out. The steerage watchman was lying on the ground, and the whole hive of Celestials were on the tramp—soft footed hounds. A lan-

for full speed ahead. Then we struck something, and there was a yell inside and outside the ship that would have lifted your hair out. When the outside yell stopped our pigtailed were on their faces. 'Run down a junk,' said my passenger—their junk. He loosed three shots into the steerage on the strength of it. I went up on deck when things were quiet below. Some one had run our Dahlgren signal gun forward and pointed it to the break of the fo'c'sle. There was the balance of a war junk—three spars and a head or two on the water, and the first mate keeping his watch in regular style.

"What is your share?" he said. 'We've smashed up a junk that tried to foul us. Seems to have affected the feelings of your friends below. Guess they wanted to make connection.' 'It is made,' said I, 'on the Glassy Sea. Where's the watch?' 'In the fo'c'sle. The half caste is sitting on the signal gun smoking his cigar. The watch are speculating whether he'll stick the business end of it in the touchhole or continue smoking. I gather that gun is not empty.' 'Send 'em down below to wash decks. Tell the quartermaster to go through their boxes while they are away. They may have implements.'

"The watch went below to clean things up. There were eighteen stiff uns and fourteen with holes through their systems. Some died, some survived. I did not keep particular count. The balance I roped up, and it employed most of our spare rigging. When we touched port there was a picnic among the hangmen. Seems that Erastias had been yowling down the cabins all night before he came to me, and kept the passengers alive. The man that spoke to me said the old man's eyes were awful to look at. He was dying to tell his fear, but couldn't. When the passengers came forward with the

sheep master to the crisp anecdotes of the Californian; from tales of battle, murder and sudden death told by the Burma returned subaltern to the bland driver of the globe trotter. The captain, tastefully attired in pale pink, sat up on the signal gun and tossed the husk of a banana overboard.

"It looked in through my cabin window," said he, "and scared me nearly into a fit." We had just been talking about a monkey who appeared to a man in an omnibus, and haunted him till he cut his own throat. The apparition, amid howls of incredulity, was said to have been the result of excessive tea drinking. The captain's apparition promised to be better.

"It was a menagerie—a whole turn-out, lock, stock and barrel, from the big bear to the little hippopotamus, and you can guess the size of it from the fact that they paid us \$1,000 in freight only. We got them all accommodated somewhere forward among the deck passengers, and they whooped up terribly all about the ship for two or three days. Among other things, such as panthers and leopards, there were six or seven giraffes, and we moored 'em fore and aft as securely as might be, but you can't get a purchase on a giraffe somehow. He slopes back too much from the bows to the stern. We were running up the Red Sea, I think, and the menagerie fairly quiet. One night I went to my cabin not feeling well. About midnight I was waked by something breathing on my face. I was quite calm and collected, for I had got it into my head that it was one of the panthers or at least the bear; and I reached back to the rack behind me for a revolver. Then the head began to slide against my cabin—all across it—and I said to myself 'It's the big python.' But I looked into his eyes—they were beautiful eyes—and saw it was one of the giraffes. Tell you, though,

freight on it. I was afraid it would break its neck drawing its head out of my window—I had a big deck cabin of course—so I shoved it out softly like a hen and the head slid out, with those Mary Magdalene eyes following me to the last. Then I heard the quartermaster calling on heaven and earth for his lost giraffe and then the row began all up and down the decks. The giraffe had sense enough to duck its head to avoid the awnings—we were awned from bow to stern—but it clattered about like a sick cow, the quartermaster jumping after it and swinging its long neck like a flail. 'Catch it, and hold it!' said the quartermaster. 'Catch a typhoon,' said I. 'She's going overboard.' The spotted fool had heaved one foot over the stern railings and was trying to get the other to follow. It was so happy at getting its head into the open I thought it would have crowed—I don't know whether giraffes crow, but it heaved up its neck for all the world like a crowing cock. 'Come back to your stable!' yelled the quartermaster, grabbing hold of the brute's tail.

like a policeman showing a shortsighted old woman over a crossing. The quartermaster sweated and panted and swore, but she never said anything—only whacked her old head despairingly against the awning and the funnel case. Her feet woke up the whole ship, and by the time we had her fairly moored fore and aft the population in their nightgown were giving us advice. Then we took up a yard or two in all the moorings and turned in. 'No other animal got loose that voyage, though the old lady looked at me most reproachfully every time I came that way, and 'You've blasted my young and tender innocence' was the expression of her eyes. It was all the quartermaster's fault for hauling her tail. I wonder she didn't kick him open. Well, of course that isn't much of a yarn, but I remember once, in the city of Venice, we had a Malayan tapir loose on the deck, and we had to lasso him. It was this way:

"Guil thyar hal," said the steward, and I fled down the companion and missed the tale of the tapir.

HER LITTLE RESPONSIBILITY

It was 2 in the morning and Epsin's Dive was almost empty when a Thing staggered down the steps that led to that horrible place and fawned on me disgustingly for the price of a drink. "I'm dying of thirst," he said, but his tone was not that of a street loafer. There was a freemasonry, the freemasonry of the public schools, stronger than any that the Craft knows. The Thing drank whiskey raw, which in itself is not calculated to slake thirst, and I waited at its side because I knew, by virtue of the one sentence above recorded, that it once belonged to my caste. Indeed, so small